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AUTHOR Brazziel, William F.
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ABSTRACT

In an examination of employment patterns and the role of higher education, it is suggested that black Americans are in the curious position of making great strides forward in college labor market training while falling behind their white counterparts in the process. The situation should be addressed by both the government and higher education leadership and the imbalances corrected. Blacks must either keep pace in the accelerated training process or fall behind in an increasingly degreed and credentialed labor market. Implications of the situation are discussed with regard to college admissions, state and regional planning, shortages in the legal and medical professions as well as underrepresentation of blacks in other occupations, and financial problems. (LBH)

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Blacks, Whites and College Training: Manpower Pools and Training Rates

William F. Brazziel
Professor of Higher Education
University of Connecticut

Black Americans are in the curious position of making great strides forward in college labor market training while at the same time falling behind their white counterparts in the process. The situation should be addressed by both the government and the higher education leadership and the imbalances corrected. This is not a benign situation. Blacks either keep pace in the accelerated training process in America or fall behind in an increasingly degreed and credentialed labor market.

Black Americans began the 1960's with 3.5 percent of their adult population having four or more years of college, adults being defined as persons 25 years of age and over. For black young adults (age 25-29 years), the figure was 5.4 percent. Blacks more than doubled the number of adults with four years of college between 1960 and 1975 and increased the training rates for young adults by the same magnitude. In 1975, 9 percent of black adults and 15 percent of black young adults had four years of college to their credit. The college trained manpower pool was estimated at 800,000 degreed adults and young adults and rates of training, i.e., production of degreed personnel was estimated at 57,000 annually. This was a remarkable increase and young college trained blacks owe a debt of gratitude to many educators in both black and while colleges and to many government workers and representatives who worked hard to bring these increases about.

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If white Americans had maintained their 1960 training rates, basic work on undergraduate discrepancies would have been done. But whites almost doubled both their degreed pools and training rates during this period. The adult pool rose from 8.1 to 14.5 percent and young adults from 12.0 to 22.9 percent. The total pool of degreed whites is estimated at 12 million.

The pool gap for black and white adults in 1960 was 4.6 percentage points. This gap expanded to 5.4 percentage points in 1975. The training rate gap for black and white adults in 1960 was 6.4 percentage points. In 1975 this gap had expanded to 7.7 percentage points. Granted that increasing uneven numbers by a constant will necessarily result in increases in percentage differences until both increases end, there is cause for alarm in the fact that 15 years of intensive work resulted in gaps larger than those at the beginning of the period.

The American college labor market training apparatus is remarkable. Some 82 percent of American 18 year old whites graduate from high school, half of these graduates go to college and over half of these entrants graduate. Said differently, about 43 percent of these 18 year olds enter college and more than half (22 percent) graduate. A good goal for blacks would be to send 43 percent of their 18 year olds to college, about 258,000 each year and to graduate 130,000 annually, slightly more than half. About 20 percent of the labor market participants in the 1990's will hold a college degree. Table 1 presents further data.

To recapitulate, black Americans must set clear goals ina period of rapid credentialing of the labor market. In the next quarter-century, 1 in 5 American workers will have 4 or more years of college to their credit and 4 in 10 will have a year or more of college training. Blacks must match this credentialing pace or fall behind in the marketplace for skills and trained manpower.

Recent increases in credentialing and training rates in the black community can be deceptive. Similar increases were made for all young people and the relative position of blacks in the scheme of things leaves much to be desired. Close attention to this dynamic seems desirable and should be forthcoming from many quarters.

Table I

Percent of Adults and Young Adults
With Four Or More Years of
College By Race and Year: 1960, 1975

Category	Year	Race and Percent		Gap
		Black	White	
Adults	1960	3.5	8.1	4.6
Adults	1975	9.1	14.5	5.4
Young Adults	1960	5.4	11.8	6.4
Young Adults	1975	15.2	22.9	7.7

Source: Digest of Educational Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics, 1976.

Note: Adults include persons 25 years of age and over. Young adults include persons 25-29 years of age.

There is evidence that young whites are slowing the rush into college somewhat. Reports of employment problems for graduates, increased efforts to expand participation in more lucrative technical occupations requiring less than a degree plus the demise of the draft and shifts in entrance patterns, i.e., deferred admissions etc, resulted in only a miniscule increase in 18 year old entrance rates for 1975 although the cohort was the largest in American history having come onto the scene in 1957 at the very height of the baby boom. The actual numbers of American students rose, however, as more and more part time students were added to the rolls.

Black freshmen, on the other hand, increased significantly in 1975 according to Astin (1975), rising from 7.8 percent in 1974 to 9.0 percent in 1975. The U.S. Census Bureau (1974) reported a figure of 12.4 percent for 1975 opening enrollment for black freshmen but caution that their figures are based on small samples and are subject to large variation and errors.

Whatever, the message is clear. Black Americans do not have enough young people in college. Black Americans do not have enough older people in college. Black Americans are losing ground in both degreed manpower pools and in the rates of training for these pools.

Halstead (1974) has developed both a social needs and a comparability approach to planning for college manpower training in states, regions and areas. The approach utilizes professional staffing ratios for some occupational clusters, e.g., one teacher per 25 students, a physician for every 750-1,000 people, and comparability ratios in others. The latter is based on assumptions that historical staffing patterns are adequate and that self correcting mechanisms have brought about adjustments needed over time for proper manpower levels in a given occupation.

Applications of these techniques to black manpower pools and training rates reveal needs of a severe magnitude. Only in the teaching profession would ample manpower be found and if college and university teaching is included, shortages appear here.

Comparability and social need realization would find 1,320,000 black students enrolled in college, 12 percent of the 11 million enrolled in 1975-76. The most generous estimate (U.S. Census Bureau, 1975) places the number at 814,000. The comparability deficit is 506,000 students and probably more.

As noted earlier, blacks need to enroll 43-44 percent of their 18 year olds in college annually, graduate half of the enrollees and maintain this training rate over time. Forty years would bring about comparability at such a rate of training. Presently, however, blacks send about 32 percent of their 18 year olds to college and graduate less than half of the entrants. Both entry and graduation rates deserve attention.

Sending half of the 18 year olds to college and graduating 60 percent of the entrants would eliminate the gap in a shorter period of time. Work with older

and returning students can also be combined with such a thrust.

Again, a worthy end product would be an overall black student population of 1,320,000 up from 814,000 presently enrolled. A worthy graduation goal would be 130,000 annually, up from present estimates of 58,000 projected for 1976. Table II contains further data.

Table II

Comparability Gaps in Black College Enrollment and Graduation Rates, 1976

Category	Number/Percent	Needed for Comparability	Gap
Total College Enrollment	814,000	1,320,000	506,000
Percent of 18 year olds Entering College	32	44	8
Graduation Rates/Annual	58,000	130,000	72,000

Sources: Social and Economic Characteristics of Families, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975 and Digest of Educational Statistics, National Center for Educational Statistics, 1975.

Note: Annual graduation rates computed by multiplying percent of degreed 25-29 year olds by number of persons in 22-23 year old cohorts and adjusting downward by 5 percent to account for non-degreed personnel with four or more years of college.

Gaps in manpower pools and training rates for black professional personnel are infinitely more severe than for undergraduates. A great deal of attention is demanded.

Telephone conversations with officials of the National Medical Association indicate that the 1976 graduating class of 900 physicians will bring the total number of black physicians to 7000. This figure provides 1 physician for every 3500 black people. Social need criteria specify 1 physician per 750-1,000 persons

as a desirable figure. A total of 35,000 black physicians are needed and the pool gap is 28,000. Training rates are also inadequate. A goal of 1400 physicians a year would be necessary for the next 40 years to eliminate gaps in needs. A training gap of 500 is manifest.

Telephone conversations with officials of the National Bar Association indicate that the 800-900 black law school graduates for 1976 will bring the number of black lawyers in America to 6,500. Law needs are similar to physicians: 1 lawyer per 750-1,000 persons. A total of 35,000 black lawyers seems desirable. The pool gap here is 28,700 and the training rate gap is 500.

A Ford Foundation study identified 2079 black doctorates in 1969 (Bryant, 1970). The National Research Council identified 914 black recipients of the Ph.D. in 1974 and 700 in 1973. Extrapolating from these training rates and the 1969 pool, an estimate of 7,000 black doctorates by the end of 1976 seems accurate. The assumption to be made here is that 1975 and 1976 rates are on the order of 1974 rates and that 1970, 1971 and 1972 rates approximate 1973 rates.

Comparability indicates a need for 40,200 black doctorates. The pool gap is thus 33,200. A training rate of 4400 a year will be necessary to simply keep pace with the rapid expansion of training in this area. A total of 37,000 doctorates were trained in 1975 and numbers are increasing sharply each year. The training rate gap is 3500. Significantly, only 9000 Ph.D.'s were trained in 1957 and present black training rates would have been adequate for those times. Table III contains further data.

To recapitulate, severe shortages exist in trained manpower in the professional ranks. Desirable goals for the black community would be cadres of physicians, lawyers and Ph.D.'s on the order of 35-40,000 for each profession. To achieve such a pool of trained manpower, 1400 physicians, 1400 lawyers and 4400 Ph.D.'s need to be credentialed each year.

Professional manpower production is a slow and laborious process and attention to long range planning seems desirable and should be forthcoming from many quarters. The annual optimal training rates are quite small, however, and the entire operation is completely manageable.

Table III

Manpower Pools and Training Rates For
Black Professional Personnel

Category	Total	Needed	Annual Training Rate	Annual Training Gap
Lawyers	6300	35,000	900	500
Physicians	7000	35,000	900	500
Ph.D.'s	7000	40,200	900	4400

Sources: National Bar Association, National Medical Association and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Ph.D. Manpower: Employment Demand and Supply, 1975.

Hopefully, Ph.D. production will level off or decline with the news of severe employment difficulties now reaching campuses. The Labor Department (1975) recently noted that if training rates continued to increase, 591,000 white doctorates would be contending for 181,000 jobs in the next decade or so. Meanwhile, the black community desperately needs principals, supervisors, superintendents, city planners, chemists, professors and many more officals and problem solvers with this degree of training. One can only wonder what would have been the case if the huge federal outlays for Ph.D. training of the 1960's had been shared equally with blacks. Retrospection is futile of course and one must look forward to a sharing - hopefully - in the years ahead.

Brazziel (1974) has developed an analysis of rates of increases of black workers across six occupational divisions. Emerging from this analysis was the need for intensive generation of increases in managers and proprietors. Blacks had 298,000 persons in this category, less than half of what was needed. By the year 2000, it was estimated that 1,140,000 would be needed. Significantly, this is one of the areas where degreed manpower is more and more the norm. Generating steep increases in black business school graduates might assume a high priority in the drive. The needed general increases for professional, technical, clerical and

service workers, many of whom are, or will be, degreed can serve as planning guides. Table IV contains further data.

Table IV

Goals for Black Workers

Occupational Category	Numbers Employed 1960	1970	Goals for 2000	Needed Increase
Professional and Technical	360,000	766,000	1,856,000	1,090,000
Managers and Proprietors	182,000	298,000	1,140,000	842,000
Clerical and Sales	700,000	1,292,000	2,076,000	784,000
Craftsmen and Foremen	420,000	691,000	1,464,000	773,000
Service Workers (police, fire, hotel etc)	1,200,000	1,547,000	1,332,000	215,000
Operatives (machines, truck drivers etc)	1,998,000	2,009,000	1,848,000	-156,000

Source: William Brazziel, Quality Education for All Americans, Washington: Howard University Press, 1974, p. 12.

Expanding black participation in higher education by another 506,000 students should not be a discouraging proposition. Neither should the generation of another 60,000 graduates annually.

Black colleges and universities still enroll about half or more of all four-year students attending college on a degree basis and these institutions generate about 50 percent of the bachelors degrees. Over the years, 70 percent of all black achievers, e.g., lawyers, doctors, government officials, army officers, have come from black colleges. The undergraduate experience, it seems, has a remarkable quality at the schools, which, incidentally, are the most integrated in the nation. About

10 percent of the students at black colleges are white and the proportion of white faculty is higher.

A 50 percent expansion of black college enrollment would generate another 100000 full-time, degree basis students and another 10,000 graduates per year. If student aid and other assistance is made available from the government, this should not prove burdensome, expansion would amount to less than 1,000 students each for the 106 or so institutions. Money will be needed, however, and the government must do its share. The schools presently enroll 211,000 students and graduate 30,000 annually.

A third of all students in white colleges and 40 percent of all blacks in white colleges are enrolled in community colleges. An expansion by rates of this magnitude would generate another 200,000 students, many on a part-time basis.

A final 200,000 students could be accomodated in state and private colleges and universities in metropolitan areas if money is made available from the government. Many of these institutions are headed into an era of empty beds and classrooms as their traditional clientele shrinks because of truncated birth rates. Black students with sizable portable federal grants might be able to find a welcome mat out where none existed before. The traditional enrollment cohorts will decline by 23 percent from 1975 to 1997. Buildings are already bonded and built, faculty is already tenured and in some cases unionized. Costs will continue to rise if enrollments don't. Again, many students will be on a part-time basis. About 50 percent of all two year and 30 percent of all four year college students are part time. Again, money is the key.

Two internal efforts will assist in the drive to expand black participation in higher education. The first is attention to problems of attrition and the second is attention to older and returning students. Some 400,000 students leave college each year, few for academic reasons. Students run out of money, get married, stay on in summer jobs with promise. Others simply tire of academic life and leave.

Attention to these problems will reduce attrition.

Many students will return later if recruited and planned for. They bring experience, maturity and added knowledge. Higher education is headed into the era of the older student. Presently, 35 percent of all students are over 25 and 15 percent are over 35 years of age. Attention to returning and older students, like attention to problems of attrition, will expand overall enrollments considerably. Significantly, more than a third of the opening fall enrollments were part time older students.

Graduate and professional expansion is also manageable though more difficult. Again, labor department analysts have estimated that 591,000 white Ph.D.'s will be produced in the next decade if present production rates are maintained and that they will contend for 181,000 jobs. This is a warning of course. The figures are receiving wide publicity and the training rates will probably come down. Faculty and other resources are still in place, however, and, again, costs will continue to rise if enrollments do not. Again, blacks with portable $6,000 fellowships might find the welcome mat out. Again, money is the key. There is also evidence that a glut of lawyers is on the horizon while demand in the black community intensifies and the same principles might apply in stimulating black enrollment: portable fellowships to create new markets.

Expansion of the two existing black medical schools plus additions of three black medical schools seems desirable as a complement to efforts to train more doctors in the 114 medical schools in the nation. Full-scale medical schools and teaching hospitals in the Atlanta University complex is a distinct and highly desirable possibility along with similar operations at Southern University in New Orleans and Texas Southern in Houston.

Several difficult problems are apparent. First and foremost is money. These funds must come from the federal sector and although they represent miniscule amounts when compared to huge outlays elsewhere, some aspects will be difficult to generate. Increases in student aid programs should not prove too difficult. The danger here

is that young blacks might follow the lead of their white counterparts and opt for pursuits other than college entrance. This would be a grave error and black civic groups and media must counsel vigorously to prevent this. Labor market saturation for degreed manpower seems to be 22-23 percent for young adults. The white community has reached this saturation level but the black community is only halfway there, with only 12 percent of their young adults so credentialed. Young blacks must have these facts brought home to them again and again and again, and they must stay at college training in the years to come.

Federal money for expansion of black colleges, for portable medical and law school fellowships and for assistance in establishment of medical schools in metropolitan areas will require insightful thinking by wise men. If people really want to do these things, however, workable programs can be developed.

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